HARAMBEE FLAME

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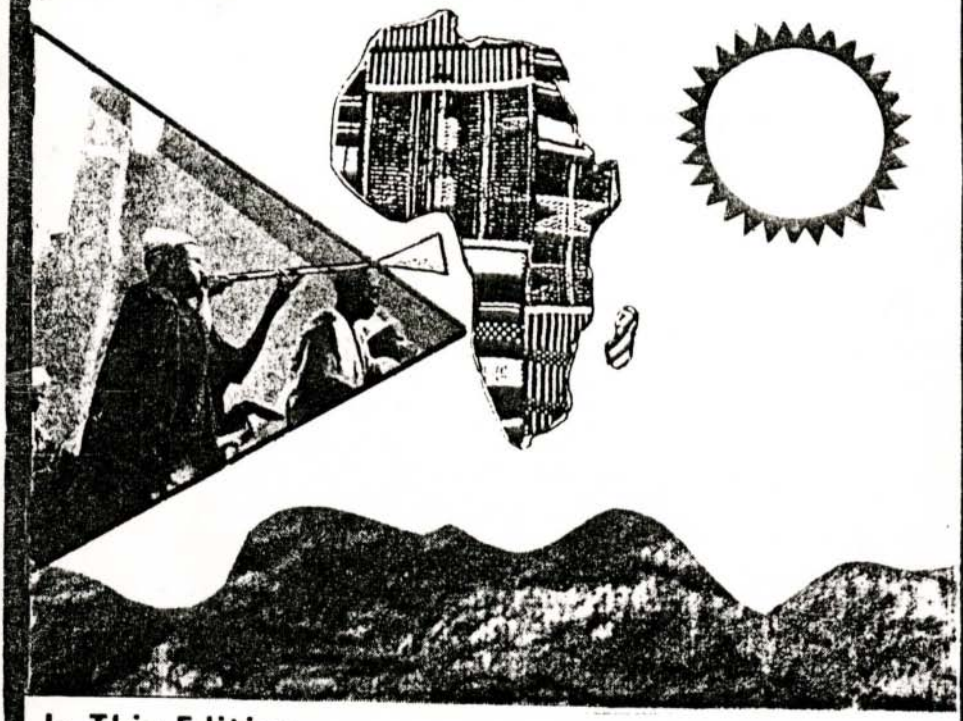

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

COMMENTARY

On the Friday, September 30th. edition of "Night Line," a feature was aired, 'Waking From the Dream', which focused on the increasing turning away from "racial" integration on the part of this country's African population. The title of this edition was a reference, of course, to Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. The Sisters and Brothers--most, if not all, of whom were professionals--interviewed expressed the opinion that integration had not worked and was continuing not to work and that it isn't working because of the unwillingness and/or inability of Caucasians to accept African people as full partners in what they typically see as "their" world.

The program, amazingly enough, did not only cover the matter of African folks' attitudes about racism, discrimination, etc. but also the matter of steps many of our people are taking to deal concretely with the failure of integration. Statistics were cited showing an increase in the percentage of African students attending historically "black" colleges and universitites. There was discussion of African professionals leaving hostile work environments at Caucasian-run businesses to start their own businesses or bring their skills to companies owned by their own people; of African parents placing their children in private, African-run schools, some with Africentric elements in their curricula; and of a kind of general desire on the part of some African folks to make our communities strong and independent of Caucasian institutions.

But while the idea that we should turn toward each other to achieve our aspirations is an excellent and necessary one, is it enough that we simply strive for our own collective piece of the proverbial "pie"? Doing for the collective

self is not a new idea. It has been put forward by several important African historical figures in this country: Marcus Garvey, Elija Muhammad, Omowale(Malcolm X), and others. It can be argued that it was his call for collective African self-determination, more than his financial settlement of a sexual discrimination suit or other issues, that got the curtain dropped on Ben Chavis' directorship of the N.A.A.C.P. Even the issue of Chavis' welcoming Louis Farrakhan, Pan-Africanists, gang and/or former gang leaders, etc. into N.A.A.C.P.-sponsored dialogue on our problems and consideration of possible solutions was not really about Farrakhan and the other men and women certain Caucasians didn't and don't deem to be acceptable. The issue was one of our right of collective self-determination vs. racist arrogance and Caucasians' belief that "father knows best." And since they view this country as their house, themselves as father, and the rest of us as mere children or servants in the house, they believe they have the right to make our decisions for us and/or have veto power over whatever decisions we might have the "nerve" to try to make on our own.

But let's return to the question of whether it is enough for us to strive for our own piece of the U.S. pie. If we pool our economic resources, maybe we can have our own schools; maybe we can establish and expand our own businesses sufficiently to employ our own people; maybe we can obtain enough land to provide for all our food needs; etc. Afterall, African people in this country reportedly had a gross national product figure last year of somewhere between 350 and 400 billion dollars. Were we to establish and adhere to a policy of keeping our spending on non-essentials to a minimum and only spending money for goods and services provided by our own people, except when such goods and/or services weren't available from them, we would be able to move forward a great deal toward achieving economic independence.

By applying this same principle of collective self-determination to other aspects of our lives(politics, education, etc.), we could make real progress toward African independence inside the U.S.--if, in fact, we were to find it desirable to stay here. In the "Community News" feature in this edition of thee FLAME, we report that Ernie Chambers is running as an independent write-in candidate for the governorship of the state of Nebraska. How much more potent our vote would be--locally, state-wide, and nationally--if the Democratic Party could not take our support for granted and if both the Democratic and Republican Parties(Demopublicans and Republicrats) knew they could not get our support without their functioning in our interests.

What if we were to achieve a situation where we were in control of not only our individual communities but of the African community nationally? Would it solve our problems? To what degree would we still have unemployment and poverty? How fewer of our children would not have functional fathers? To what extent would our elders be respected? How much of a difference would it make with respect to our physical environment(purity of air and water, condition of housing, etc.)? If we are "waking from the dream," are we only waking from the dream of integration or from the American Dream. If it is only the former, then those of us who are awaking are only rejecting the idea of integration with Caucasians, not their values.

Not all facets of the European/Caucasian value system are dysfunctional or/and destructive for and to us. But, without doubt, the values of individualism, competitiveness, intense materialism, "white" supremacy(which becomes, for us, "black" inferiority), and other values have shown themselves to be devastating in their

impacts upon us. Without a rejection of these values, any self-determination we might attain would be a mirror of U.S. Caucasian society and bring with it the same kinds of problems that that society has come to experience.

We would have, as we do now, African teachers with European minds teaching African children to believe in their own inferiority as "blacks," African businesspeople putting financial profits ahead of the needs of their people, African males looking at African females as "bitches" and judging their physical beauty according to a Eurocentric standard, economically well-to-do Africans looking down on their not-so-well-to-do Sisters and Brothers and those Sisters and Brothers holding resentment toward well-to-do Africans in general, and Africans mistreating other Africans in a myriad of other ways. And though some of this mistreatment would not necessarily be due to values and attitudes we have learned from the dominant Caucasian society, much of it would. Ultimately, some of our own people would become "the man."

If we are awaking from "the dream," it must not only be from the dream of integration but from the American Dream, which Omowale so aptly referred to as the "American Nightmare." Unless we release ourselves from this American nightmare, and the values and attitudes of which it is comprised, any victory over the first dream will be a shallow one at best. But maybe just as or more importantly, it is improbable, if not impossible altogether, that we will be able to gain any kind of collective empowerment as long as we remain hooked on the values and attitudes of the society we increasingly do not want to be a part of.

-Editor

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., Africa, and elsewhere. "Community News" is another vehicle.

We encourage you to submit your reports, essays, poems, etc. Please enclose stamped return envelope.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Chicago Youth Organizations' Development Plan

"When the youth organizations in L.A. and Chicago nounced plans for peace, they subsequently announced plans for their participation in the development of their communities...

"The Chicago plan, which focused primarily upon the Cabrini-Green area, was drafted by the King David Black Disciples, the King Cobra Nation, the North Branch Gangster Disciples, and the Magic Insane. It was endorsed by a coalition of other community organizations, religious institustions, political activists, and elected officials. It was presented to Chicago's mayor, Richard M. Daley, and to the equally infamous housing authority chairman, Vince Lane. This plan called for:

1) The provision of educational, job training, and recreational activities to all youth and adults.

2) U.S. Representative Cardiss Collins to convene a congressional hearing on 'what led to the destruction of Cabrini-Green and the entire Near-North Black community'.

3) U.S. Housing and Urban Development regional administrator Gertrude Jordan to 'cite Metroplex, the owners of Town and Barden Apartemts, for gross violation of their contract with HUD, and to reclaim the property and turn them into scattered site housing' for Cabrini-Green residents.

4) The repair of all vacant Chicago Housing Authority units, and their occupation by homeless families.

5) The turning of the 1117-1119 Cleveland Avenue building into a multi-purpose service center including an alternative high school, drug program, library, and a shelter for youth and adults.

6) The construction of a theatre, bowling alley, and a recreational arcade.

7) The support of existing agencies, churches, and community organizations that already provide services to the area residents.

8) The provision of additional resources and support to all area schools.

9) The establishment of food and clothing cooperatives for the area. The establishment of a 24-hour troubleshooter hotline.

10) The holding of elections for Local Advisory Councils. The establishment of community-wide governing Councils that represent all groups in the community. And, the holding of monthly accountability sessions and status reports..."

-from "Let's 'Gang-Up' On Oppression: Youth Youth Organizations and the Struggle for Power In Oppressed Communities," pages 1-8, Sept. CROSSROAD(Chicago, IL.)

Report On Second African American Leadership Summit

"...the former executive director of the NAACP declared victory August 22 in announcing the successful conclusion of the second African American Leadership Summit...

"Rev. Benjamin F. Chavis, recently dethroned from his post at the historic civil rights organ-

ization, said the movement started at the summit will now go across the country...

"He announced a list of broad initiatives--including health, communications, moral and spiritual renewal and economic development--focused on during the two-and-one-half day summit. Specific programs were devised through group workshops that will be taken back to the community for implementation, he said.

The economic development committee, for example, proposed the establishment of an African American development fund; the communications committee proposed establishing local and regional information centers and generating support of Black media and holding advertisers accountable; and the education committee recommended curriculum reform in public schools, proper training of teachers and the elimination of tracking, which was termed 'racist'...

"He said the initiatives proposed demand community participation and he announced a 15-city Victory Tour to promote and familiarize the Black community with the summit process. The next summit meeting will occur Dec. 10-12 in Chicago at the Institute of Positive Education...

"Noting the importance of women to the liberation struggle, Rev. Chavis said females will comprise 50 percent of all decisionmaking bodies in the AALS. He announced that Phi Beta Sigma fraternity has offered the summit office space and that soon a post office box and fax machine will be acquired. Also, he announced an interim co-ordinating committee to move the summit process forward..."

-from "Rev. Chavis Convenes Black Summit Despite Firing," pages 3 and 8, Sept. 14 THE FINAL CALL

Investigation Of Medical Abuse Of Africans In U.S.

"...And in the name of medical science, African-Americans have been exploited in numbers that far exceed their proportion in the U.S. population. If victims were poor, they were even more likely to be targets of medical abuse.

"These are among the key findings of a special three-month EMERGE investigation into medical experimentation on Blacks. As a part of this inquiry, dozens of people were idnterviewed, hundreds of medical journal articles, books, magazines and newspaper accounts were combed and carefully analyzed...

"In 1952, Chester M. Southam of the Sloan-Kettering Institute injected at least 396 inmates at Ohio State Prison--almost half of them Black--with live human cancer cells. One of the sponsors for Southam's research was the National Institutes of Health, which also sponsored the Tuskegee syphilis study...The fate of Southam's prisoners remains unknown...

"In another prison case, inmates were used in flawed blood plasma trials between 1967 and 1969 throughout the state of Alabama. The study was managed by Dr. Austin R. Stough at Kilby, Draper and McAlester prisons. According to a NEW YORK TIMES account, there was no informed consent and no accurate records kept. Dr. Stough was expelled several times from hospitals and prisons after men became sick and died from a variety of diseases stemming from his experiments...

"At Willowbrook State Hospital in Staten Island, N.Y., researchers who wanted to study hepatitis decided in 1973 to give their mentally retarded charges hepatitis, both through injections and through another even more disgusting route. Dr. Cecil Wecht, coroner of Allegheny County in Pennsylvania and past president of the American

College of Legal Medicine, explains the experiment in the book, LEGAL MEDICINE: 'They took dretarded youngsters, with no informed consent and most probably without any kind of consent, and gave them orally a fecal extract containing hepatitis virus to see what the medical results would be'. The result: Many of them contracted hepatitis..."

-from "Human Guinea Pigs," pages 24-35, Oct. EMERGE Magazine(Arlington, VA.)

U.S. Apparel Industry Makes Killing In Haiti

"...by unilaterally exempting the US assembly industry from the OAS trade embargo, the US government has gone even further, playing straight into the hands of the Haitian military and the supporters among the business elite...

"This loophole benefits the US assembly companies and retailers who gain access to wages of 14 cents an hour, while gouging the US consudmer with prices marked up 400 andd 500 percent over the cost of production...

"Looking at the period 1983 to 1989, Haitian apparel exports to the US more than doubled, growing to $81 million in 1983 to $180.9 million in 1989...By 1989, apparel accounted for a full 47 percent of all of Haiti's exports to the US. However, at the very time of this expansion in the assembly industry in Haiti, the real wagee of the Haitian apparel worker were slashed by over 50 percent...Under the 807 tariff program, US-cut fabric enters duty-free into Haiti, where it is assembled and then shipped back to the US. On re-entry into the US, duty is assessed only on the value added in Haiti, namely is solely the cost of assembling the piece goods...

"US assembly companies in Haiti(either US-owned or under contract) pay no taxes, either corporate or personal; and the materials they assemble enter and leave the country duty free. Rent

(Cont. on page 12)

ONCE THE NEW WEARS OFF

there was a time ago when i sang
"we shall overcome"
quite sometime ago
when with those of skins from dark to pale
i shared a rainbow dream/a vision of equality
of a time to come
but that was a long yesterday from now
when the singing of that song would bring
a tingling up my back and a warming to my head
just as the "star spangled banner" late at night
some years before
would stream from the tube with jets
flying across the screen in black and white
to coax with ease my standing
with hand over heart at patriotic attention
but i knew and understood so little
was such a fish out of water
loan-sharked with "our" country's
political cliches and my own wishful thinking
but that was a time ago
quite some time ago
i have had since then
to cry over spilled blood and learn
that too many crooks HAD stolen the broth
emptying my head of melting-pot dreams
so that now the sounds of "we shall overcome"
and the sight of people singing it
are to me a phony resurrection
a corpse made to sway to a meaningless melody
by assimilationist hands propping it up
in a grotesque pantomine of life
a crass, discount-store magician's trick
to reward believers in this house of cards.

-Mondo

in the free trade zone is approximately $2.25 per square foot per year. The companies--in violation of Haitian law--pay no health or pension benefits to their employees. Wages in the maquiladora plants are approximately (U.S.)$.14 per hour..."

-from "Who Benefits From US Policy In Haiti," pages 13 and 17, July/Aug. ARM THE MASSES (N.Y., N.Y.)

Editor's Note: Obviously, there have been some very serious developments since the above-cited article appeared. Nevertheless, the information regarding the economic exploitation of both the Haitian workers and U.S. consumers by the apparel industry is instructive, pointing out, once again, that the line between foreign and domestic affairs is often thin, if not altogether nonexistent.

Africans In Houston Put The Idea Of Pan-Africanism Into Practice, Provide Aid To Haiti And Rwanda

"Hundreds of thousands of Houstonians responded to a call from Operational Unity, a group of six community organizations, during a 16-hour relief drive to benefit the people of Haiti and Rwanda. According to the Walter Davis accounting firm, organizers collected more than 27 tons of non-perishabsle food items, medical supplies and $34,000 in cash donations.

"Coalition members included the Haitian-American Ministries, the Nation of Islam, National Black United Front(NBUF), Shrine of the Black Madonna, Pan African Orthodox Christian Church, S.H.A.P.E. Community Center,Inc. and the Ta-Seti Ancient African Historical Society...

"In Haiti, the supplies are designated for 'improving health care, education and the general welfare of the people of Haiti'. Supplies collected for Rwanda will be immediately

(Cont. on page 14)

COMMUNITY NEWS

Ernie Chambers has been in the Nebraska State Legislature since 1970. During the almost quarter of a century that this lone African has been in that body, one of the causes he has most consistently and and vigorously championed is that of abolishing Nebraska's death penalty. In fact, in 1979, he was successful in getting a bill passed repealing the death penalty. That bill was vetoed, however, by then-Governor Charles Thone.

Spurred on by the recent murder of Wili Otey in Nebraska's electric chair, a number of individuals and groups, reportedly led by Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, have called upon Ernie to challenge the Demopublican and Republicrat candidates for the governorship in this upcoming general election.

On September 21st., Ernie announced that he will run as a write-in candidate for governor. His candidacy will serve to inject a pro-life(anti-death-penalty) position into a campaign in which both the incumbent, Ben Nelson, and his Republicrat challenger, Gene Spence, support the death penalty and are in essential agreement on several other major issues.

In addition to making use of his campaign to speak on the death penalty, Ernie will be dealing with a number of other issues. As he stated to us in an interview on September 30th., "I will not be running a one-issue campaign...I think the most wrenching, most destructive problems in this country are social in nature. Just as political problems cannot be solved by military force, social problems cannot be solved by locking everybody up." Because Nelson and Spence are political and philosophical twins and offer no challenges to the political status quo, it is expected that Ernie will receive support not only from African people but from other groups as well who get nothing but a deaf ear from the political establishment.

distributed to ease the pain and suffering of masses of displaced Rwandans living in ill-equipped and unsanitary refugee camps in neighboring Zaire..."

-from "A Helping Hand: Haitian/Rwanda Relief Day Organized By The Black Community Of Houston," page 35, Sept. 28 THE FINAL CALL

Africans In Brazil Establish Own Institutions To Battle Racism And Bolster Their Sense Of Identity

"...there are more Black people in Brazil than any country except Nigeria, and...those Blacks are embarking on an undaunting struggle against a unique brand of racism...

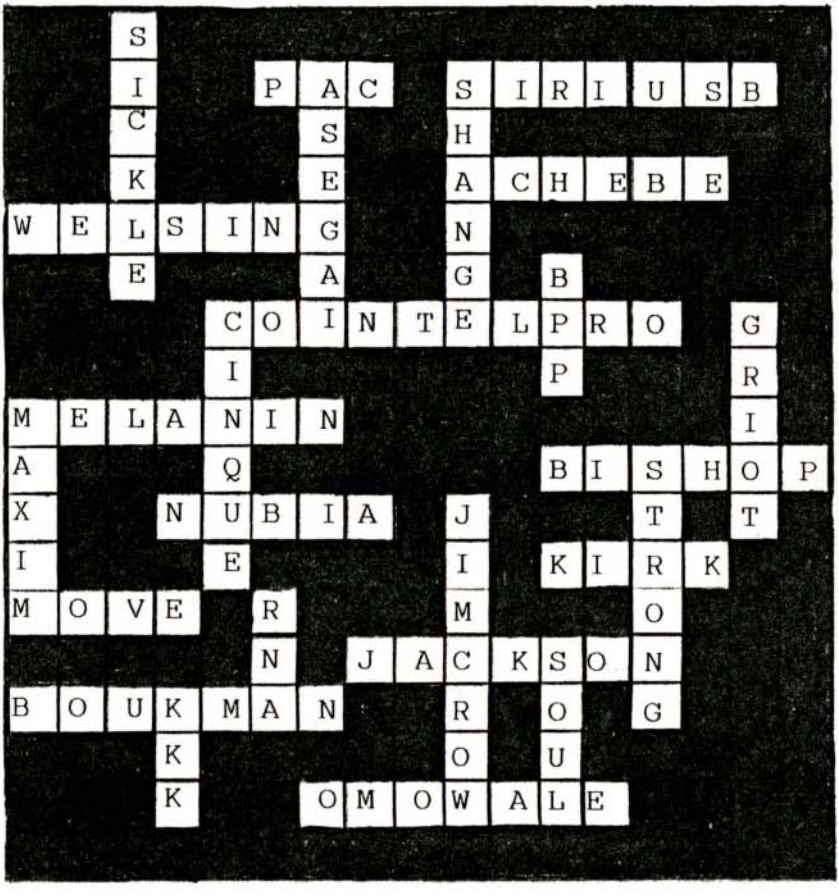
"'When we compare Brazil and the United States, we are facing two different models of domination. While the Anglo-Saxon Protestant says that [Blacks and Whites] are different, we don't have contact, it gives you a way of developing your consciousness because your enemy is very clear. The other model [Latin Catholic] is supposed to be assimilationist, so you don't keep your identity as Black or as African. All you dream is to be second-class White'.

"Of the many activists confronting racism, Joao Jrge Santos Rodrigues' weapon of choice has been culture...In 1979, Rodrigues founded Olodum, originally a group of musicians and dancers that performed during carnival...

(Cont. inside rear cover)

BACK IN TIME

"When Dessalines established the black republic of Haiti in 1804 it was a harbinger of hope to American Negroes as well as to West Indians...These hopes were articulated by one of the most prominent leaders of the period, a well-to-do Barbadian immigrant who lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he had established a school for colored children. In 1787, when the American Masonic Lodge refused an application of Negroes for a charter, he had secured one from the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and founded the first fraternal order among Afro-Americans, African Lodge No. 459, with himself, Prince Hall, as founder.." St. Clair Drake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Solution to September Africentric Puzzle

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Black Culture On Tour In America"--The Carter G. Woodson Foundation is a multi-disciplinary arts organization that administers Black Culture On Tour in America, the OnStage in New Jersey performance series, and the Artists-In-The-Schools program. Sponsoring organizations utilize the services of the Woodson Foundation frequently when designing Black women's pr0grams, arts-in-education programs, performance series, and festivals. The Carter G. Woodson Foundation is a non-profit tax-exempt organization that is supported in part by grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, the National Endowment for the Arts, Victoria Foundation, National Black United Federation, etc. For general information, call (201) 242-0500.

Among the groups listed in the Foundation's 1995-1996 Black Culture On Tour In America roster are: Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, Ensemble Theatre Company, Women's Sekere Ensemble, Pan Jersey Steel Orchestra; individuals: Sonia Sanchez, Jawanza Kunjufu, Gil Noble,...

New release from Baobab Associates, Inc.: IMAGES OF AFRICAN SISTERHOOD: INITIATION AND RITES OF PASSAGE FOR WOMANHOOD by Nsenga Warfield-Coppock, Ph.D., with foreward by La Frances Rodgers-Rose of the International Black Women's Congress. Available from Baobab Associates, Inc.; 7614 16th. St. N.W.; Washington, D.C.; 20012. Tele. No. (202) 726-0560.

If you live in Nebraska, **Aframerican Bookstore** is the place for books by, for, and about African people. The address is 3226 Lake St.; Omaha, NE.; 68111. The telephone number is (402) 455-9200.

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"'Olodum uses a musical message, transmitted by its world-famous band to develop social justice, celebrate the Afro-Brazilian contribution to Brazilian society and internationalize the struggle for civil rights in Brazil', says Olodum's public policy dirctor, Marcello Gentil...

"In Olodum's free school, some 400 children age 6 to 17 learn academics, as well as African culture, through dance, music and 'capoeira'(pronounced cop-oh-AY-ra), an Angolan martial art...

"And residents of some 'favelas'(slums) also have taken advantage of their own resources to organize community schools for Black children. Activists and educators in a Salvador neighborhood created Escola Aberta do Calabar(Open School of Calabar), for children in their first year of school through fourth grade...

"Escola Aberta do Calabar survives on private donations. Community activists have arranged for several city businesses to donate 2 percent of their profits to the school.

"Black activists say their North American cousins' Civil Rights and Black Power movements, as well as the African liberation struggles of past decades, are significant inspirations. According to Regina Santos, making connections with Black groups outside Brazil is another important strategy.

"Next year marks the 300th anniversary of the death of Brazil's most important Black historical figure, Zumbi de Palmares, the last ruler of the Palmares settlement of escaped slaves which fought off the Dutch and Portuguese from 1605 to 1694...Black organizations and leaders from the U.S. will be invited to learn about Brazil's problems and to help develop solutions..."

-from "The Two Faces Of Brazil," pages 38-42, Oct. EMERGE Magazine